

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: American Red Cross - Chicago

Application ID: 14AC157291

Program Name: Safe Families AmeriCorps Program

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant clearly identifies the communities that will be served by the proposed project, the number and demographics of individuals who will be educated about disaster preparedness and the number of community-based disaster exercises that will be conducted.

The applicant provides relevant FY2013 statistics of the American Red Cross disaster response (1,537) and number of families served (2,860) in the State of Illinois.

A strong support of the scope/severity of the need (improve community resilience for disaster events), is provided in examples of the wide geographic dispersal of disaster sites (99 of 102 counties), size of population requiring disaster related financial assistance (60,000 in 2012), and need for lay responders to improve heart attack survival.

Applicant gives acceptable data on the need for disaster preparedness.

Applicant gives sufficient data on the need for CPR.

The AmeriCorps members provide feedback, formally and informally, to address the needs for modifications to the program, thereby having a direct impact on the services provided to the target population and identified communities.

The applicant states its mission is to educate 96,000 individuals by utilizing 27 AmeriCorps members to leverage an additional 270 volunteers. This project model indicates a strong potential for success.

The core activity of 27 AmeriCorps members as the focal points to leverage 270 volunteers is a key strategy that has strong potential for success through the solid planning and management support found in the narrative.

The logic model elements comprehensively cover the intervention: they are detailed and measurement oriented (e.g., a majority of outputs incorporate specific target numbers), and they are well-aligned to potentially cause change in

the recipients (the range/type of outcomes are reasonable to expect).

Intervention is effectively supported by the incorporation of a variety of evaluation tools measuring outcomes (e.g., K and 3-5 pre- and post-testing, Community and Partnership Survey System (CPSS), Community Safety Day pre- and post-training survey).

The applicant's Theory of Change and logic model detail an effective program.

The applicant documents the number of citizens receiving preparedness training and reports that 100% of those surveyed reported an increased knowledge in preparedness skills.

The applicant has documented experience in increasing community disaster preparedness. They report that they have exceeded their targeted goals in the past three years.

Past success in solving the current identified need is strongly supported by 2010-13 data, in which the applicant consistently met or exceeded numerous output targets (e.g., exceeded goal of 60,000, by 5,827 reached with disaster preparation information and achieved survey evidence of desired outcome change in recipients of 100% increase in knowledge for at least two emergency preparedness skills).

The applicant states they were successful in meeting most of their performance objectives in the three years the program has been running.

Weaknesses:

Historical and statistical data is supplied about previous natural disasters for the State of Illinois and the American Red Cross's response to those disasters; however, the application contains no details or supporting data to indicate the true need for the proposed project in the specific regions that they propose to serve.

The applicant states that the four target regions to be supported by the project have been identified as areas with a high incidence of individual disasters and are at risk for natural disasters; however, no information is provided to support this statement.

Some of the data collected by the applicant, though based in Illinois, may or may not apply to the program target areas.

Need-related data for high-risk communities (identified as focal points for intervention) was brief and insufficient to clearly define which populations require focused intervention.

No significant weaknesses noted in the AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems Evidence Base and Measurable Community Impact section.

The applicant does not provide data on how they met their program objectives.